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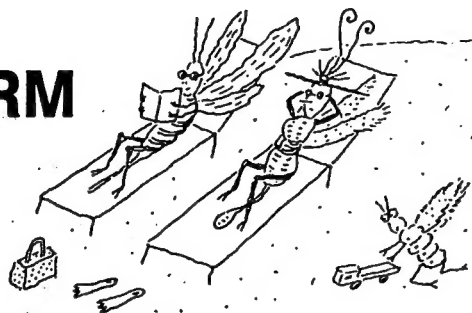
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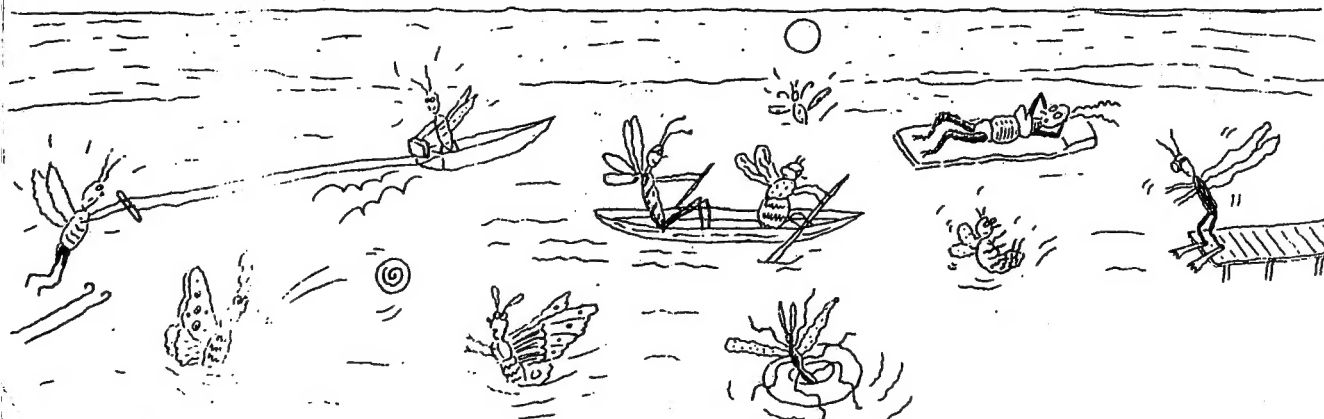
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AFFIRMATION NEWSLETTER

UNITED METHODISTS

FOR LESBIAN AND GAY CONCERNS

FALL 1987

RECEIVED
FEB 23 2024

BY: GENERAL CONFERENCE PLANS ARE UNDERWAY

Plans for AFFIRMATION's presence at the 1988 General Conference of the United Methodist Church were approved at the Fall National meeting in St. Louis. We developed three principles to guide our strategy: no guilt; giving and receiving gifts; and justice-seeking as an ongoing process, not an apocalypse. In order to use our resources most efficiently and to recognize an affinity of interests and commitments, AFFIRMATION and the Reconciling Congregation Program will establish a joint presence at General Conference. Thus, members of either group are welcome to take part in all the activities and use all the facilities that have been planned or reserved.

The planning committee has already drafted legislative proposals, which have been circulated to selected annual conferences. Some of these have been adopted by annual conferences and sent on to General Conference. This process means that those proposals will be printed in full in the pre-Conference reports

that delegates receive. We will update the 1984 platform statement to include legislative proposals and have it ready for circulation this Fall. We intend to coordinate our attempts to influence legislation at General Conference with other justice seeking caucuses. Some of our people will be involved in tracking legislation through committees.

Our on-site presence will begin with an all-day training event on April 25, 1988, a Monday that falls right between the end of the Spring meeting and the opening of General Conference. This event will emphasize once again the principles of our presence and the techniques of self-care. We will once again form covenant groups, which will include those who are on site and those who cannot be present.

AFFIRMATION and RCP representatives will room together near the convention site and will maintain a hospitality room and office within three blocks of the convention hall.

con't next page

CONFERENCE PLANS CON'T

We will publish and distribute a daily newsletter, host a dinner honoring justice seekers, hold an AIDS memorial worship service and organize a choir to sing wherever we can. Individuals may perform in various types of street theatre or offer shoulders rubs to delegates and lobbyists. We will be creating a General Conference "Gift List" to name items we will want or need to carry out our program and nurture our bodies and souls in the process.

People planning to attend General Conference should keep the following dates in mind:

April 22-24, 1988

--National Affirmation Meeting

April 25, 1988

--Pre-Conference Training Event

April 26-May 6, 1988

--General Conference

All events will take place in St. Louis, Missouri. There will be a housing reservation form in the Winter National AFFIRMATION newsletter. Those who want to help with planning or carrying out the various programs should send a note to National AFFIRMATION; P.O. Box 1021; Evanston, IL 60204. It will be forwarded to the coordinator of the appropriate activity.



NOMINATIONS FOR 1988-90 COORDINATING COMMITTEE BEGIN

AFFIRMATION'S present national structure calls for a ten-member Coordinating Committee, composed of five men and five women two of which Affirmation designates as its official spokesperson. The Coordinating Committee is elected to serve for two years. In addition to gender parity, Affirmation is committed to geographical, age and background diversity on the Coordinating Committee.

The current Coordinating Committee will complete its term in April 1988. Your input into the nominating process for the next Coordinating Committee is very important to the ongoing strength of AFFIRMATION. Please give careful consideration to this request and make your suggestions no later than January 15, 1988. (see mailing and calling instructions below)



The process includes the following:

--National AFFIRMATION policy instructs the present Coordinating Committee to prepare a final slate of 10 nominations and 2 alternates for presentation to

con't next page

NOMINATIONS CON'T

AFFIRMATION's Spring business meeting April 23, 1988.

- A six-member nominating committee was named during the regular fall business meeting of AFFIRMATION Sept. 19, 1987, St. Louis.
- Names will be solicited and submitted to this nominating committee between September 19, 1987 and January 15, 1988. Send all suggested names to: AFFIRMATION Nominating Committee, P.O. Box 24213, Nashville, Tn 37202. Indicate if you want the Nominating Committee Chairperson to call you to further discuss your nomination(s).
- Prior to submitting their name(s), it will greatly assist the process if you make every effort to check with the person(s) regarding their willingness to serve if asked.



- The nominating committee will present its suggested slate to the current Coordinating Committee at its February 13-15, 1988 meeting. In continuing consultation with the six-member nominating committee, a finalized

slate of 10, with 2 alternates will be determined.

- Between Feb. 15 and April 15 all persons selected for the final slate will be officially contacted to verify their readiness and willingness to serve if elected.
- The finalized slate will be presented during the April 23 business meeting for final action by AFFIRMATION members present. This action of election will also include the naming of the two Spokespersons for AFFIRMATION, who will be two of the ten persons elected to the 1988-90 Coordinating Committee.

THANK YOU FOR PARTICIPATING IN THIS IMPORTANT PART OF AFFIRMATION's LIFE!!!



NEW FINANCIAL POSITIONS

Jan Olson of Chicago has officially assumed all responsibilities as the treasurer of National AFFIRMATION. Mike Underhill of Chicago will serve as the financial secretary.

All inquiries about pledges and contributions and all bills for payment should now be sent to our national post office box: P.O. Box 1021, Evanston, IL 60204.

Briefly, the new division of responsibility is that as treasurer Jan will pay all bills and deposit all funds. She will then give Mike the information necessary so that he may prepare periodic financial reports. These reports are available at every national meeting.

Roger Kruse of Mesa, AZ, continues to serve as the overall financial manager, coordinating all of AFFIRMATION's various fundraising activities and managing the budget.

Collectively, Jan, Mike, and Roger comprise the Financial Management Task Force. This group is charged with implementing the financial policies adopted by the national membership.



NATIONAL MEMORIAL FUND

Did you know that National AFFIRMATION has a memorial fund?

The Memorial Fund was originally established several years ago after the death of Michael Collins, one of the early leaders of AFFIRMATION. The Fund continues to be available as one way of honoring the life of any member or friend of AFFIRMATION.

Contributions to the Fund are used in the general work of AFFIRMATION to fight homophobia and promote justice in the United Methodist Church.

To utilize the Fund, you simply send a contribution and informational note to our national post office box: P.O. Box 1021, Evanston, IL, 60204. An appropriate acknowledgement note will be sent to whichever relatives, lovers, or friends you specify.



NATIONAL CONSULTATION FOR AIDS MINISTRIES

Churches are not only aware of the AIDS crisis but some of them--the United Methodist Church included--are starting to attack the problem.

With the help of a number of San Francisco experts, more than 300 United Methodists from across the United States will receive training here Nov. 12-15 on how local churches can minister to persons with AIDS (acquired immune deficiency syndrome).

They will be attending the National Consultation on AIDS Ministries at the Clarion Hotel in Millbrae near San Francisco International Airport. The meeting is sponsored by three boards of the United Methodist Church.

The Rev. Cecil Williams, pastor of Glide Memorial UMC, will give a major address on "Ministries of Caring and Compassion" and also lead a workshop on social and political advocacy. The Rev. Duane Wilkerson, pastor of Calvary UMC, and the Rev. Kim Smith, Bethany UMC, will train person for a "ministry of presence."



A panel of four nationally known authorities on AIDS will update the group on the epidemic and its effects Nov. 13 at 10:15 a.m. Panelists are

*Dr. Paul Volberding, leading epidemiologist and director of the AIDS program at San Francisco General Hospital, speaking on global dimensions;

*Pat Norman, co-chair of the recent March on Washington, reporting on women/persons of color and AIDS;

*Dr. James Dilley, director, AIDS health project, UCSF, discussing psycho-neurological aspects and how churches can help patients;

*Dr. Margaret Gregory, medical director, Haight-Asbury Free Clinic, on AIDS and intravenous drug use.



AIDS MINISTRIES CON'T

Harry Britt, member of the Board of Supervisors for San Francisco, will address an interfaith dinner Saturday, Nov. 14, at 7:00 p.m., hosted by United Methodist Bishop Leontine Kelly of the San Francisco Area. The dinner will highlight the importance of working ecumenically on the AIDS problem.

The consultation is to enable persons from local churches to develop "visible ministries in compassionate and hope-filled response to the theological, spiritual, social and medical challenges of AIDS," said Cathie Lyons, conference director and staffer of the Health and Welfare Ministries Department, Board of Global Ministries.

"The church can't help being involved. Among those living with AIDS are men and women who were married in our churches, babies whose births we've celebrated, children we've baptized and church leaders who've responded to the call to go, teach, preach and heal," she said.

Most intensive training will take place in workshops on such topics as education for AIDS prevention, home care, pastoral care, assuring access to quality care, developing liturgies and worship services, developing financial and human resources for AIDS ministries, human rights, and homophobia.

—United Methodist
News Service



R C UPDATE

We are pleased to announce two new Reconciling Congregations. In New Orleans, St. Marks Church declared themselves a Reconciling Congregation. We also welcome University Church in De Kalb, Illinois.

If you are searching for a Christmas gift for a friend, we have just the answer. A gift subscription to Open Hands. The annual subscription rate is \$12.00. To subscribe, send your check to: Open Hands, [redacted] Washington, D.C. [redacted]

ATTITUDE IMPORTANT FOR GENERAL CONFERENCE

The General Conference of the United Methodist Church meets every four years to establish policy and direction for the Church as a whole. The next meeting will be next Spring in St. Louis, Missouri. AFFIRMATION has been present at every General Conference since our beginning as an organization. We will be in St. Louis.

Our attitude will be an important part of our 1988 presence at General Conference. Our working groups throughout the last year have stressed an attitude of being who we are, celebrating, and stressing that we are in and of the Church. In the Fall meeting in St. Louis, we talked of three principles: no guilt; giving and receiving gifts; and justice-seeking as an ongoing process, not an apocalypse.

Guilt often enters into dialog in either of two patterns, supplication and accusation. When we supplicate, we start from an attitude of deficiency, begging that the Church might refrain from hurting or judging us. We lead with our wounds, in hopes that they might elicit sympathy. In the process, we define ourselves as "wounded" and the Church as an aggressor. Under the surface, we carry a belief that we are, appropriately, objects of sympathy.

The movement from supplication to accusation involves letting go of the assumption of deficiency. It still carries, however, the connotation that the entity being accused has all the power, which it is misusing. If we adopt an angry attitude, we will be declaring to ourselves and others that we feel largely overpowered or powerless.



If we truly believe that God loves us, accepts and empowers us as we are, it is appropriate to move to an attitude of celebration, claiming wholeness, power, and the capacity to give and receive gifts. Taking this attitude, we will come to General Conference in an attitude of realistic, celebrative joy. Our realism tells us that 1988 will not mark the end of the age-long struggle for greater justice and love in the world. Our joy comes from our knowledge that God is with us, loving us, now, and that we accept and love ourselves and each other. Our celebration will be of God's love manifest in ourselves and each other.

ATTITUDE CON'T

It is important to make our preparation for General Conference part of a strategy for life-long justice work. It is so easy to move into an apocalyptic frame of mind, believing that this time we will make or break, and then the struggle will be over. The fact is, the struggle is our life, for all people concerned for justice. We cannot plan to "win the battle" and then celebrate. We must celebrate our lives and their gifts in the midst of the struggle. This means developing a life-long pattern of justice work that emphasizes celebration, self-care, connection, nurturance, and balance of work and play, action and spiritual sustenance.

Certainly we are all capable of our own theological reflections to make sense of our position. I do mine by thinking on Jesus' statement that the Kingdom (I prefer Community) of God is at hand. "At hand" has so often been interpreted to mean "coming soon in time," which easily supports an apocalyptic vision. I prefer to think of "at hand" as meaning "at your fingertips"--right here, right now. All we have to do is take God's hand (to anthropomorphize), to live as though we were God's people, now. Yes, it means taking on God's concern for justice for all

people, Yes, it means being present for those who suffer. But, and this is an important message for those of us prone to over-commitment or burn-out, it also means that we celebrate God's presence in the world now, along the way. We celebrate it with love and laughter, song and dance, touching and praying and open-hearted joy. We are God's people. As Paul said, that can't be taken from us by principalities--or by institutions. Regardless of the actions of the 1988 General Conference, we will continue to be God's people, called to lives of celebrative witness to God's enduring love.



CHANGES RECOMMENDED

WASHINGTON (UMNS)--The United Methodist Church's chief social action agency called Oct. 10 here for striking from official denominational statements a provision saying homosexuality is "incompatible with Christian teaching."

The proposed change was approved by a 40-24 vote of the Board of Church and Society's 93 lay and clergy directors from across the United States present when the ballot was taken. Several other alterations in the 9.2 million member denomination's official stance on homosexuality were approved for transmittal to the General Conference opening April 26 in St. Louis.



Similar changes were recommended four years ago by Church and Society and some other units and individuals within United Methodism. Individual and organizations also issued calls for stronger condemnation, and the 1984 General Conference eventually retained most of the standing language and added stiffer bars to gay and lesbian clergy.

The debate on homosexuality here was the longest and most emotional during three days spent considering two dozed proposed changes in United Methodist positions and church law to be sent to the 998 General Conference delegates.

The branding of homosexuality as incompatible with Christian teaching became part of the church stance in 1972. Attempts at change have been made each four years since.

Also sent to General Conference was wording designed to clarify provisions of church law that prohibit the use of United Methodist funds at the national level to "promote the acceptance of homosexuality." The proposed change would stipulate the curb on use of funds does not "relate to expenditures for research, education and consultation" regarding homosexuality, ministries to individuals, or efforts to protect human and civil rights.

—United Methodist
News Service

SPRING MEETING

The focus of the Spring meeting in St Louis will be racism.

There is a possibility that a decision to amend the by-laws will be made at the Spring Meeting. Please be prepared for a discussion of any changes.

REGIONAL ORGANIZING

AUSTIN AFFIRMATION

Congradulations are in order to one of the newest Affirmation groups in our connection! Gay and lesbian United Methodists of the Southwest Texas Annual Conference, supportive clergy and friends have been meeting since August and have grown to around thirty-five members. The October monthly meeting featured getting to know each other better and viewing the videotape of the RC Conference in Chicago. Contacts for this new witness to God's inclusive love are Jan W. and Doug T. at [REDACTED] Austin, TX [REDACTED] or [REDACTED]

MADISON AFFIRMATION

The Madison group resumed its regular schedule of program meetings of the first and third Sundays of each month in Room 205 of University UMC, Madison. An end of summer potluck featured socializing and planning for the upcoming year. Over 1400 brochures promoting the RC Program were mailed to Wisconsin clergy and lay people through the Board of Global Ministries of the Wisconsin Conference as a result of work by Madison Affirmation and Rev. Tom Garnhart of University UMC. Join the group at University UMC. 1127 University Ave. Madison WI 53715 or call [REDACTED]

AFFIRMATION SEATTLE

The Seattle group kicked off a busy Fall with a cookout in Lincoln Park to share news of the summer. A potluck meeting on Mondays and business meeting on Thursdays constitute the two regularly scheduled meetings for the group each month. Additional events included the Carter Heyward Lectures at 1st UMC, Seattle, and the Pacific-Northwest Conference task force on Reconciling Congregations. A spaghetti feed provided Halloween festivities. Contact the group: [REDACTED] Seattle, WA [REDACTED] or call [REDACTED]



NEBRASKA AFFIRMATION

The Cornhusker folk heard excellent reports of successful fundraisers for the RC Program held at Pearl UMC, Omaha and Aldersgate UMC, Lincoln. Monthly meetings are held on Fridays and alternate between Lincoln and Omaha. Join in at [REDACTED] Lincoln, NE [REDACTED] or call [REDACTED]

MINNESOTA AFFIRMATION

The Minneapolis-St. Paul group rejoices with Wesley UMC in celebrating one year as a Reconciling Congregation. The group meets twice monthly at Wesley UMC. Affirmation, Wesley UMC and St. Paul-Reformation Lutheran Church are joining to hold a prayer service: "Prayer: Key to Faith, Key to Hope, Key to AIDS," with ALC Bishop Lowell Erdahl preaching at Wesley UMC. Ideas from the planning meeting that all Affirmation groups could benefit from include: weekly Bible study on Acts, regular monthly Worship, establish closer ties to potential Reconciling Congregations, promote John Wesley's "a Bible and a Friend" to encourage group growth, and encourage closer ties with those of United Methodist heritage in Evangelicals Concerned and in the MCC. Call for information Mike at [REDACTED] Tim at [REDACTED] or Wesley UMC [REDACTED]

NASHVILLE AFFIRMATION

The Nashville group meets on the fourth Wednesday of each month for support, outreach and community building. Meetings center around a topical discussion and a time of devotion or worship. Future plans include the annual group retreat. Contact the group at [REDACTED] Nashville, TN [REDACTED] or call [REDACTED]

SACRAMENTO AFFIRMATION

Sacramento Affirmation was proud to have 100% of its core membership present for the Fall Meeting in St. Louis. In September the group as a member organization of the The Sacramento Interfaith Coalition for Lesbian/Gay Concerns hosted and participated in an Interfaith Worship Service as a witness to the gay/lesbian community that we are a people of faith and that there is a place for us in organized religion. An Enrichment Weekend For Lesbian and Gay Male Couples was cosponsored by the group together with the Board of Discipleship of the California-Nevada Conference. Our fall agenda continues as we work with the California-Nevada Conference Committee on Homophobia to promote awareness of the Reconciling Congregation Program. Monthly meetings of the group have centered around a study of Judy Grahn's book, Another Mother Tongue, Gay Words, Gay Worlds. For more information call [REDACTED] or [REDACTED]



REGIONAL ORGANIZING

AFFIRMATION METRO ST. LOUIS

The St. Louis group hosted over seventy persons for the Fall Meeting of AFFIRMATION at Lafayette Park UMC in September. The group meets regularly at Shaw Avenue UMC for twice monthly worship and business/study meetings. Clergy persons from the Missouri East and Southern Illinois Conferences have been guest liturgists. Contact the group at [REDACTED] St. Louis, MO [REDACTED] or call [REDACTED] or [REDACTED]

AFFIRMATION OKLAHOMA

The group in Oklahoma City meets every Saturday evening and fall programming includes: Ron Shafer, editor of The Gaily Oklahoman, New Testament Bible Study, AGO Halloween Concert at OCU, potluck suppers with Shirley Hunter and a community attorney. Memorable special events include Halloween Party with Dignity, outings to the Zoo and to Kingfisher and the Christmas Dinner. Join in at [REDACTED] Oklahoma City, OK [REDACTED] or call [REDACTED]



BAY AREA AFFIRMATION

The Affirmation group meets once a month at different places in the Bay Area to encourage participation. The group meets for potluck and discussion on Sunday afternoons. For more information about times and location call Fritz at [REDACTED]



DALLAS/FORT WORTH AFFIRMATION

Seventy gay and lesbian United Methodists, their friends and family gather on the fourth Monday for potluck, hymn singing, a program and worship. Recent speakers include Methodism's premier composer and Perkins Theological School professor, Jane Marshall and Rev. Ted Karph of St. Thomas the Apostle Episcopal Church. The weekly Bible Study on Acts continues and the United Methodist Men's Chorus ie. Affirmation Chorus performed at Northhaven UMC's evening service in October. The November social event made every cowboy and cowgirl's blood run hot: The Texas Gay Rodeo. For more information: [REDACTED] Dallas, TX [REDACTED] or call [REDACTED] or [REDACTED]



WESTERN NEW YORK AFFIRMATION

The group meets every first Sunday afternoon and every third Thursday evening at Ontario Street UMC, Buffalo for worship, fellowship and group awareness of its mission to the Church and to the gay and lesbian Community. The group participated in the Northeast Regional Retreat at Watson Homestead on Nov. 6-8. A priority for '87-'88 is to identify supportive congregations and pastors so that gay and lesbian persons may be referred to spiritual homes. Join in at [redacted] Hamburg NY [redacted] or call [redacted]



KANSAS CITY AFFIRMATION

Approximately thirty gay men, lesbians, friends and family meet regularly on the second Thursday for worship, including Communion, fellowship and mutual support and outreach to the community. The group sponsored one of its member's travel costs to Washington for the march so that gay and lesbian Methodists from Kansas and Missouri would be represented. Contact the group at [redacted] Kansas City, MO [redacted]

CHICAGO AFFIRMATION

The October monthly meeting featured slides of the March On Washington. Program topics vary and the group has regular potluck get togethers. Hoping to impact the church, the group subscribed to OPEN Hands for each delegate of the Northern Illinois Conference going to General Conference--an idea that should be implemented by all Affirmation groups. Join in at P.O. Box 1021, Evanston, IL 60204 or call Annette at [redacted] David at [redacted] or Michael at [redacted] or [redacted]

LOS ANGELES AFFIRMATION

The implications and possibilities of the March on Washington was the topic for the November meeting of the group at 1st UMC, Hollywood. A Thanksgiving celebration and the Advent Potluck Dinner provided holiday kinship and fun. The group is donating gift subscriptions for Open Hands to the California-Pacific Annual Conference delegation to General Conference. Contact the group at [redacted] Hollywood, CA [redacted]



REGIONAL ORGANIZING CON'T

INDIANAPOLIS AFFIRMATION

Meeting monthly on a regular Thursday, soon to be determined, the Indianapolis group has a social time together and then gets down to business. Some of that business includes participating in the Adult Forums-with topics including AIDS and prejudice "Bias and the Pious" at North UMC. The group traveled to Rockville for the Parke County Covered Bridge Festival. For more information contact Marcia K. at [REDACTED] Indianapolis, IN [REDACTED]



OREGON-IDAHO AFFIRMATION

A sizable group of Affirmation members and friends gathered at the Annual Conference dinner sponsored by Affirmation and MFSA to hear Alice Knotts who spoke of her work compiling the MFSA resource, "Thinking It Through; United Methodists Look at the Church and Homosexuality." The Portland area fellowship continues to meet monthly on the third Friday for potluck and discussion. Join in at [REDACTED] Portland OR [REDACTED] or call [REDACTED]

MID-ATLANTIC AFFIRMATION

Affirmation friends from all over the country were hosted by the Washington D.C. group during the March on Washington. A dinner and worship service featuring Rev. Rose Mary Denman drew well over 100 persons. Sunday evening worship continues at Dunbarton UMC, Georgetown and the group is again sponsoring the Neighborhood Bible Study with Foundry UMC. Contact the group at [REDACTED] Washington D.C. [REDACTED] or call [REDACTED]



PRACTICING HOMOSEXUALS

Church law specifically prohibiting homosexual persons' becoming United Methodist ministers is being recommended for deletion by the church's General Board of Higher Education and Ministry.

The board voted 39-27 at its Oct. 14-17 meeting to ask the denomination's highest governing body--the 1988 General Conference--to remove the following sentence from church law:

"Since the practice of homosexuality is incompatible with Christian teaching, self-avowed practicing homosexuals are not to be accepted as candidates, ordained as ministers, or appointed to serve in The United Methodist Church" (paragraph 402.2, The Book of Discipline).



Four persons abstained in the stand-up vote.

Among board governors who spoke against deleting the sentence was the Rev. Thomas B. Stockton, High Point, N.C., who said its removal condones the lifestyle of homosexual persons. "(Homosexual) persons can be affirmed and loved by the church, but this action will say that the lifestyle is OK. And that's a statement many of us cannot accept."

The Rev. E. Dale Dunlap, Kansas City, favored dropping the restriction. He cited what he called "a lack of sufficient knowledge and honest dialogue" on the issue of homosexuality, and called for further study.

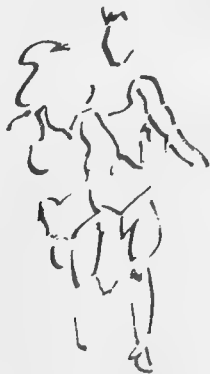
"It is fairly apparent to me that our present posture is largely the result of cultural and social conditioning, rather than being biblically and theologically informed and grounded," said Dr. Dunlap, a faculty member of Saint Paul School of Theology. He admonished board members to leave the matter of qualifications for clergy in the purview of the individuals' annual (regional) conferences and their respective boards of ordained ministry.

PRACTICING CON'T

Dr. Dunlap affirmed the primacy of Scripture in informing church law, but said it has been used selectively by some United Methodist leaders to condemn homosexual persons without studying biblical teachings in the context of experience, tradition and reason as taught by John Wesley, United Methodism's founder. He cited Leviticus 18:22, which calls homosexuality an "abomination", but said the verse's author does not present it as binding moral law.

In a background statement, Dr. Dunlap recalled the circumstances under which the general conference condemned homosexuality in 1972. He said the action was passed with little or no "biblical and theological preparation."

He declared the major reason for the pronouncement to be that "without it, we would lose a great number of members to the Southern Baptists. As a people of God we are called to be prudent, not for sake of membership numbers, but to be faithful to the word and will of God."



Church legislation banning ordination of homosexuals was enacted by the 1984 General Conference. The 15--year--old debate promises to heat up at the 1988 legislative session, as a number of the 73 annual (regional) conferences have asked for changes in the law, from strengthening the ban to eliminating restrictions based on specific sexual conduct.

—United Methodist
News Service



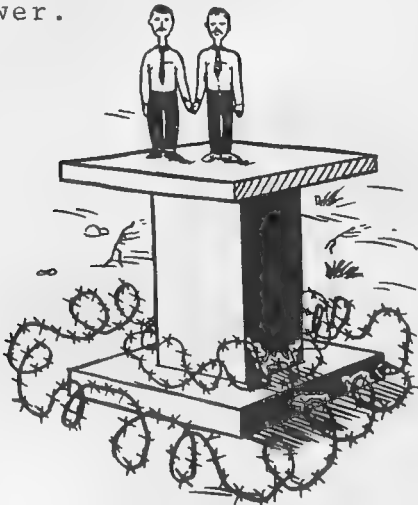
DO YOU HEAR THE WHISPERING?

As a cool breeze amidst the summer heat of our lives, the Gospel of Our Lord whispers to our souls: Do you hear the wisperings?

Walking home late one night, two teenage boys followed me for several blocks. Coming abreast of me while waiting for the light to change, one turned and said, "Hey Queer, you're going to Hell!" Despite my fear, I found the courage to say "I may go to hell, but it won't be because I'm queer!"

Do you hear the
whispering?

He was with God in the beginning. Through him all things came to be, not one thing had its being but through him. All that came to be had life in him and that life was the light of men, a light that shines in the dark, a light that darkness could not overpower.



For a long time I had wanted to attend the worship services conducted by Affirmation. Finally, last Sunday I went. As I swallowed hard and walked through the door, each and every one came up to me, smiled, and said that they were glad to meet me. For such a small group, their voices filled the Church when they sang hymns. And during Communion, the minister said, "This is the Body of Christ which was given for YOU" and I cried unashamedly.

Do you hear the
whispering?

However drinks this water will get thirsty again; but anyone who drinks the water I shall give will never be thirsty again: the water that I shall give will turn into a spring inside him, welling up to eternal life.

I overheard two of my colleagues discussing AIDS today and agreeing between themselves that it really must be a punishment from God for the sin committed by the homosexuals. To speak out against their ignorance would have branded me as sympathetic to homosexuals and maybe even as a homosexual myself. So I remained silent.

con't next page

'IT WAS LIKE COMING OUT TO THE WORLD'

Do you hear the
whisperings?

Simon Peter said, "Lord where are you going?" Jesus replied, "Where I am going you cannot follow me now, you will follow me later." Peter said to him, "Why can't I follow now? I will lay down my life for you." "Lay down your life for me?" answered Jesus. "I tell you most solemnly, before the cock crows you will have disowned me three times."

Do you hear the
whisperings?

—Taken from the St.
Louis Newsletter

by Bill Hicks

I had never been to Washington, D.C., so I was excited about being there. I wasn't even thinking about the march. Wasn't that my purpose here? Was it just the need for a vacation? I didn't even bother deciding. I was in D.C., a new town, a place on the map I'd never been to.

Saturday evening my boyfriend Mike and I sat around at our host Peter's place and talked about AFFIRMATION (the gay Methodist

and talked about the Affirmation (the gay Methodist group) group we'd be with during the march. At 9 a.m. on Sunday we all left the house to go meet the other Affirmation people at a park along the way (our pre-march meeting spot). Affirmation members were going to carry red balloons with gold streamers. I helped organize the mass production of helium filled balloons. We tied the balloons, cut and tied string, and cut and taped the streamers. I helped though I wasn't part of Affirmation. Though I knew some of the members through Mike, I still didn't feel like I belonged. What was I doing in D.C?



MARCH CON'T

At 11 a.m. we all went to the Ellipse, the meeting site for the march. I kept my eyes open for interesting people and signs. I started to get interested when I saw the diversity of the crowd. People carried signs about love and life, and sex and AIDS. Many were about the abuse gays and lesbians suffer daily. I wasn't alone! People were on my side.

By noon we had started lining up behind the other groups. As 13:30 p.m. approached I was getting weary of inching along. We still weren't in the march. What was happening up there? It looked like rain-I knew it, I was going to get drenched and the parade was going to be ruined. What would happen if you threw a party (or parade) and no one came? My feet were killing me and I felt alone.

At 1 p.m. we moved into the march. My God! Everybody is here. How can so many people stand on one sidewalk? Are there risers? It looked people were at the bleachers in the ballpark. They must have been six to 10 deep with people on the sidewalk, on the stairs of the buildings, and sitting on ledges.



It was at this point that Affirmation started singing a religious song. I sang along, but started to get paranoid. Is someone going to shoot me, or worse yet, take my picture? I'm not out to everyone-not even to my parents or most of my family. They knew where I was, but not the complete reason why. I hadn't told them I wanted to feel a sense of communion and acceptance among my gay and lesbian brothers and sisters. I was there for the march, to support and participate in it, but they never asked why.

Well, these feelings only lasted a few minutes, until Affirmation started singing: "2-4-6-8, What makes you think your preacher's straight?" When I heard the laughing and cheers from the crowd I melted into an "acceptance pool." I felt powerful, I felt loved and I loved myself. I took hold of my boyfriend's hand and held it with pride. Damn the people who couldn't handle my sexuality-I'd handled theirs for 23 years. I enjoy being gay and no one was going to take my moment of triumph away from me. It was like coming out to the world and being totally accepted.

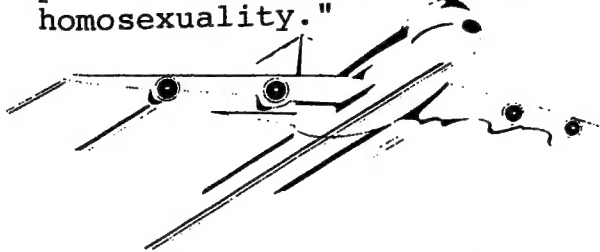
Courtesy of Windy City Times.

CHURCH LAW

PROHIBITING FUNDING

NASHVILLE, Tenn. (UMNS)-
-Board members of the United Methodist agency for equipping local churches in evangelism, lay ministries, worship and Christian education have asked that church law prohibiting funding for projects "promoting" homosexuality be amended to allow educational programs related to gay and lesbian people.

The General Board of Discipleship, at its Oct. 6-8 meeting, drafted a proposal to the denomination's chief governing body--the 1988 General Conference--asking that paragraph 906.12 in The Book of Discipline be amended. The paragraph currently asks that the General Council on Finance and Administration ensure that no general United Methodist funds go to any gay caucus or group or "to promote the acceptance of homosexuality."



Discipleship members said the paragraph was not intended to preclude study of relevant issues concerning homosexual persons and ways to minister to those persons. but that the law as it now stands could be used to restrict such needed study.

The board is proposing an additional clause: "This provision shall not preclude participation in educational programs and the development of resources in concurrence with Social Principles and other official statements of the United Methodist Church related to homosexual people."

The proposed clause was accepted by the nearly 90 board members with little debate, though one man asked if a "hidden agenda" were implicit. Others reminded him that the United Methodist Social Principles, while claiming that homosexual practices are incompatible with Christian teaching, endorses the "sacred worth" of gay men and lesbian women, and that study of the issues are often necessary as the church seeks to minister to all people.

—United Methodist
News Service

NEXT NEWS LETTER

Articles for the next Newsletter must be sent to me by February 1. Please mark this date in your calender. Send all items for the Newsletter to Fritz Schultz at [REDACTED] S.F. CA, [REDACTED]

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Albany, CA

Mary Gaddis

Holy City, CA

Roger Kruse

Mesa, AZ

Annette Oliver

Chicago, IL

D.J. Porter

New Hope, PA

Maggie Roe

Lincoln, NE

Brad Rymph

Washington, DC

Tim Tyner

Dallas, TX

COORDINATING COMMITTEE

Mike Underhill

Chicago, IL

And one lesbian whose name
cannot be used.

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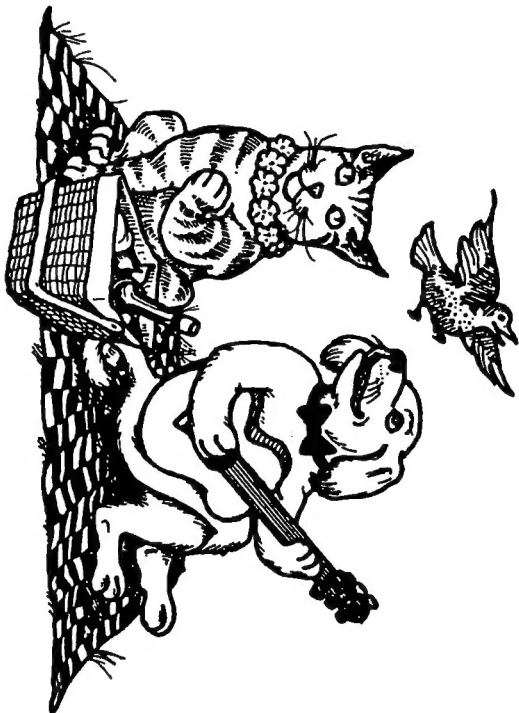
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